

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claim 16 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 6-8 and 10-13 are amended. The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claim 1. (Original.) A method for producing a food product comprising:

- a) contacting meat with lactobionic acid; and
- b) producing a food product from the meat contacted with lactobionic acid.

Claim 2. (Original.) The method of claim 1 comprising mixing minced meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 3. (Original.) The method of claim 1 comprising treating pieces of meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 4. (Original.) The method of claim 1 comprising tumbling meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 5. (Original.) The method of claim 1 comprising marinating meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 6. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 comprising freezing the food product.

Claim 7. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 comprising heating the food product.

Claim 8. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the meat is fish meat.

Claim 9. (Original.) The method of claim 8 wherein the food product is surimi.

Claim 10. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the claims 1-8~~ claim 1 wherein the food product is an emulsified meat product.

Claim 11. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the claims 1-7 and 10~~ claim 1 wherein the meat is from beef, pork, chicken, and/or turkey.

| Claim 12. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the preceding claims~~claim 1 wherein the lactobionic acid is in the form of sodium, potassium, magnesium, or calcium lactobionate.

| Claim 13. (Currently amended.) The method of ~~any of the preceding claims~~claim 1 wherein the lactobionic acid is produced by enzymatic oxidation of lactose.

Claim 14. (Original.) A meat based food product comprising lactobionic acid.

Claim 15. (Original.) The food product of claim 14 wherein the amount of lactobionic acid is between 0.1 and 20 % (weight/weight) of the food product.

Claim 16. (Cancelled.)